

LYNN^{Sight}

Building a better world with our students.



2 University center
timeline

8 Celebrating
Christine Lynn

34 Lynn's Irish
connection

Building anticipation

Taking a project from architectural vision to actual building is a detailed process. Below is a timeline of 13 exciting milestones to anticipate as the Christine E. Lynn University Center becomes a reality.



April
Groundbreaking!

Trinity Lake reshaping is complete. Frogs move back in.

May
Fencing surrounds the site: Looky-loos search for gaps. **Overhead lines** are gone. Thanks, FPL!

June
“H” lot is finished. Suddenly, summer parking’s a breeze. **Demolition** ends. Anyone unearth the missing time capsule?

July
Concrete trucks roll in. Now it gets real.

November
Exterior details materialize. Builders call it the “skin.”

February
“Skin” is in. It’s getting close now!

March
Interior work begins. Floors, lights, décor—the fun stuff!

September
Landscaping takes shape. The park gets green.

November
Millwork arrives. Doors are the final to-do.

December
Punch list Greg Malfitano, Tom Heffernan and the Gerrits crew fuss over final details.

2019
Ribbon cutting The doors open to the Lynn community!

2017

2018

2019

Christine E. Lynn University Center architectural renderings by Gensler



The heart of our campus

Namesake donor Christine E. Lynn enjoys a heartfelt celebration with 1,500 at university center groundbreaking.

Construction is officially under way on the new Christine E. Lynn University Center!

Lynn’s student body turned out in happy multitudes April 20 for the groundbreaking ceremony, wearing festive red “We ♥ you” T-shirts.

“I love every T-shirt you’re wearing,” Mrs. Lynn said to the students, faculty and staff who crowded into a massive white tent to witness the ceremonial shovel photo op, their shirts a bright red embrace against her “Lynn blue” dress.

“I feel great honor and pride,” she said, “to break ground on this university center.”

The benefactor and board of trustees chairwoman told the audience she never could have imagined such a day. “If anyone had told me 37 years ago when I was an RN in Oslo, Norway, that my husband and I would have a university named after us, I would have told them, ‘You’re crazy,’” she said.

Her \$15 million grant for the university center—the largest in the school’s history—is one of many bestowed by the Lynn family. The library, two residence halls, the salon at the Wold Performing Arts Center, the eatery Christine’s, the Eugene M. and Christine E. Lynn College of International Communication, all were funded by gifts from Mrs. Lynn and her late husband, Eugene. >

“I feel great honor and pride to break ground on this new university center.”

—Christine Lynn



Public relations junior Cassidy Kruse, speaking for the student body as president of the Student Activities Board, said the university center will be much more than just a new building. Its collaborative spaces will allow 33 campus clubs and organizations to finally have a shared home.

“It will stand at the heart of our campus as a symbol of the university’s heartbeat—its students,” Kruse said. After her speech, she presented Mrs. Lynn with an engraved vase.

President Kevin Ross said it simply, “Christine, you inspire us all with your big heart.”

Dozens of donors to the project joined students in congratulating Mrs. Lynn. And then they enjoyed a delicious cookout on the grounds.

Photos

- 1. President Kevin M. Ross and Christine E. Lynn do the honors.
- 2. Our golden-shovel donors: John Gallo, Barbara and Richard Schmidt, Barbara Gutin, Elaine J. Wold, Mrs. Lynn, President Ross, Mary Ann Perper, Helen Ross, President Emeritus Donald Ross.
- 3. It's selfie time with students at the groundbreaking ceremony.
- 4. Friends, faculty and family applaud the student speakers.
- 5. Hard hats and heavy equipment signal exciting things to come.
- 6. Mrs. Lynn admires general counsel Mike Antonello's T-shirt.
- 7. Knights of the Roundtable strike a pose.
- 8. Student speaker Cassidy Kruse expects the university center to be a hub of collaboration.



Celebrating Christine

[Mrs. Lynn's 70th birthday party pics are inside >](#)



Party of the season!

On April 20, Lynn’s board of trustees chair and benefactor Christine E. Lynn marked two important milestones in one day. Just hours after breaking ground on the new university center that bears her name, she celebrated her 70th birthday with 200 friends at a black-and-white gala on the Lynn campus.

President Kevin Ross delivered a Champagne toast with a show-stopping visual aid.

“Christine, to say thank you for all you do for our campus and community, we wanted to go big,” he said. He then unveiled a billboard-sized photo of Mrs. Lynn that the university had arranged in Times Square to thank her for her commitment.

The guest of honor—the only one dressed in anything but white or black—wore a red gown as she mingled, danced and laughed with her guests. The details and decorations in the gym (transformed into a glamorous party space) were perfectly Christine Lynn. Specialty cocktails were served in disco ball cocktail glasses and an ABBA medley was performed—her favorite dance music.

The high point of the evening was a tender gesture from Lynn students. As they entered, 70 students sang Stevie Wonder’s “I Just Called to Say I Love You.” Each student carried a candlelit birthday cake. Guests then joined in singing, “Happy Birthday.”

The party favors? Red Chanel lipstick, the birthday girl’s signature shade.



“Christine, to say thank you for all you do for our campus and community, we wanted to go big.”

—President Kevin Ross

1



3



7



4



5



8



2



6



The party favors?

Red Chanel lipstick,
the birthday girl's
signature shade.

Photos

1. The lady in red finds her CEL monogram on the bar.
2. Everybody conga!
3. The cake parade is the highlight of the evening, with 70 students singing the birthday song.
4. Aerial acrobats fly and spin overhead.
5. Musicians keep the dance floor crowded all night.
6. The youngest guests embrace Mrs. Lynn in a birthday hug.
7. Dancing queen: Mrs. Lynn cuts a rug with her friends.
8. Mrs. Lynn's table is the only one set in red, topped by a tower of roses.



Thank you, donors.

The faces of generosity

Meet the donors behind the special spaces in the Lynn University Center, and the students and alumni grateful for them.



"The university center is one of those things to look forward to—it's going to bring us all together."

—Melissa Baptiste '18



Mary Ann Perper

Perper Mailroom and Mary Ann and Harold Perper Kitchen and Dining Servery

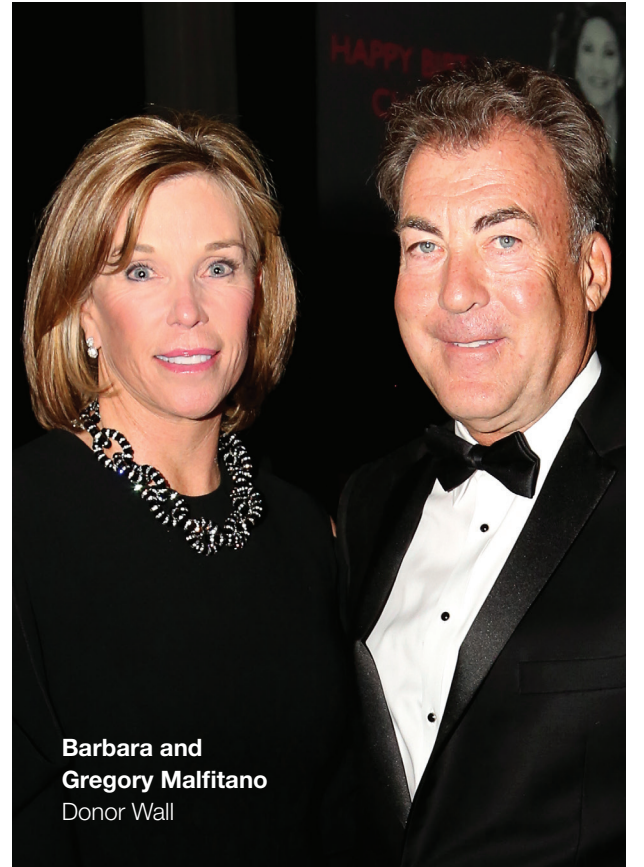


Christine E. Lynn

Christine E. Lynn University Center and Christine's



Donald and Helen Ross
Donor Wall

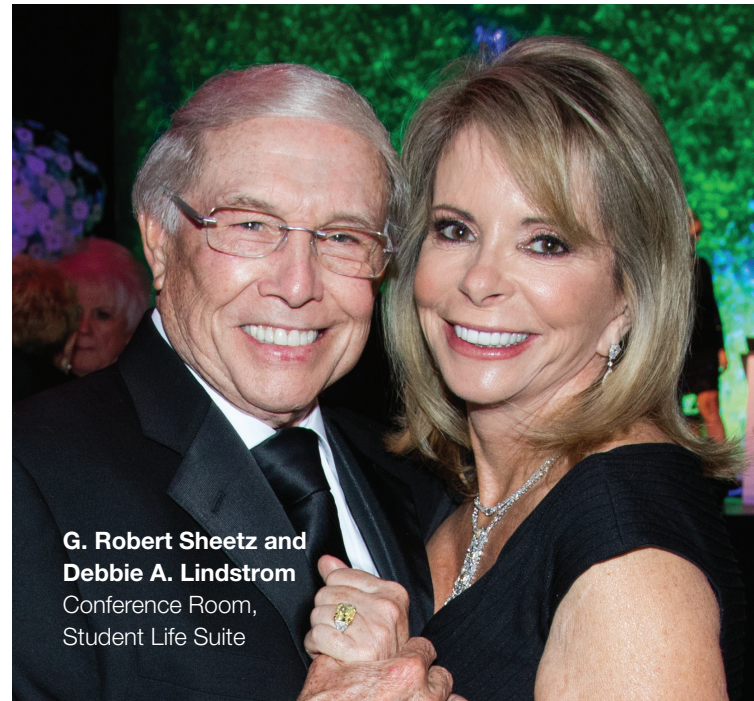


Barbara and Gregory Malfitano
Donor Wall



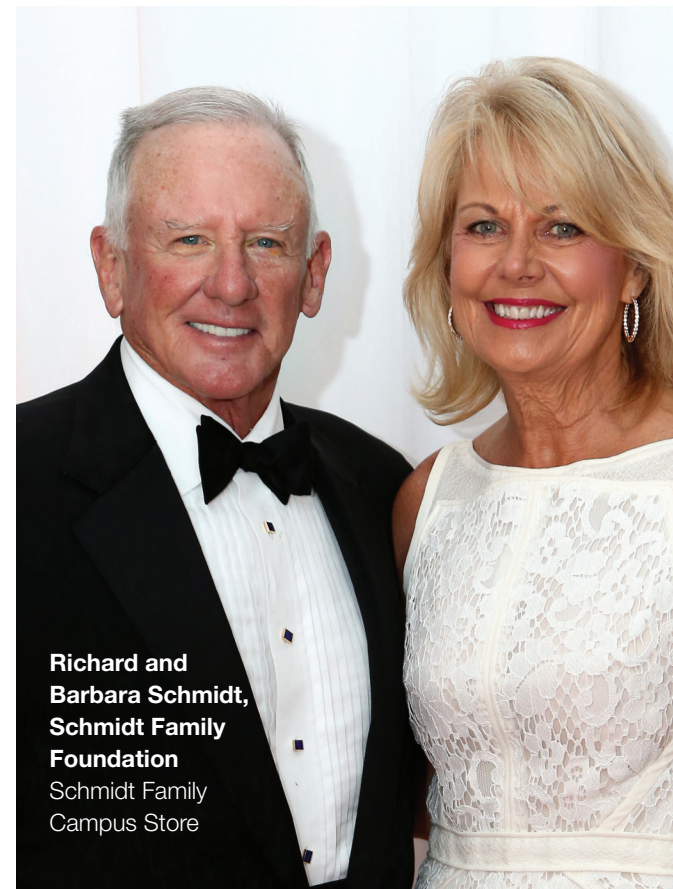
Deanna and Chris Wheeler

Office, Hannigan Center for Career Connections



G. Robert Sheetz and Debbie A. Lindstrom

Conference Room, Student Life Suite



Richard and Barbara Schmidt, Schmidt Family Foundation

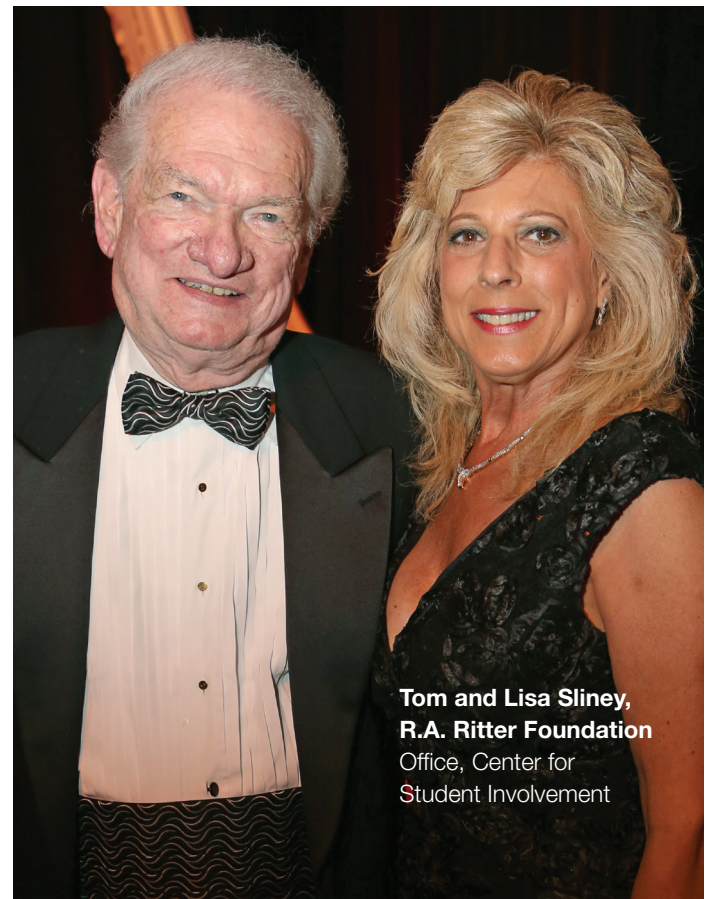
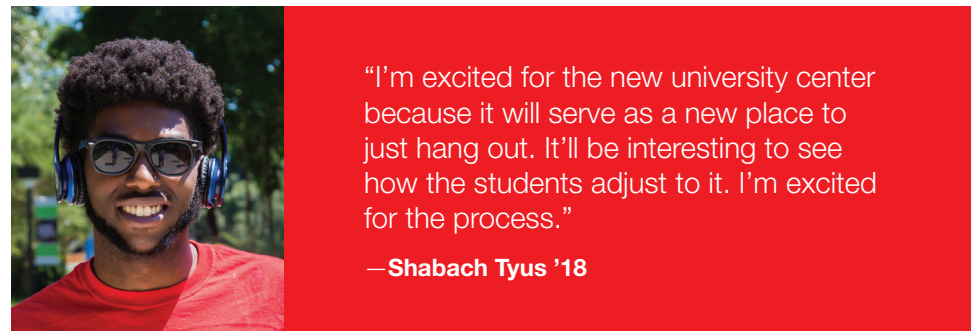
Schmidt Family Campus Store

"I believe this building—which is located at the center of campus—will be vital for student life, something we're all about."

—Omar Martinez '17



Elaine J. Wold
Elaine's



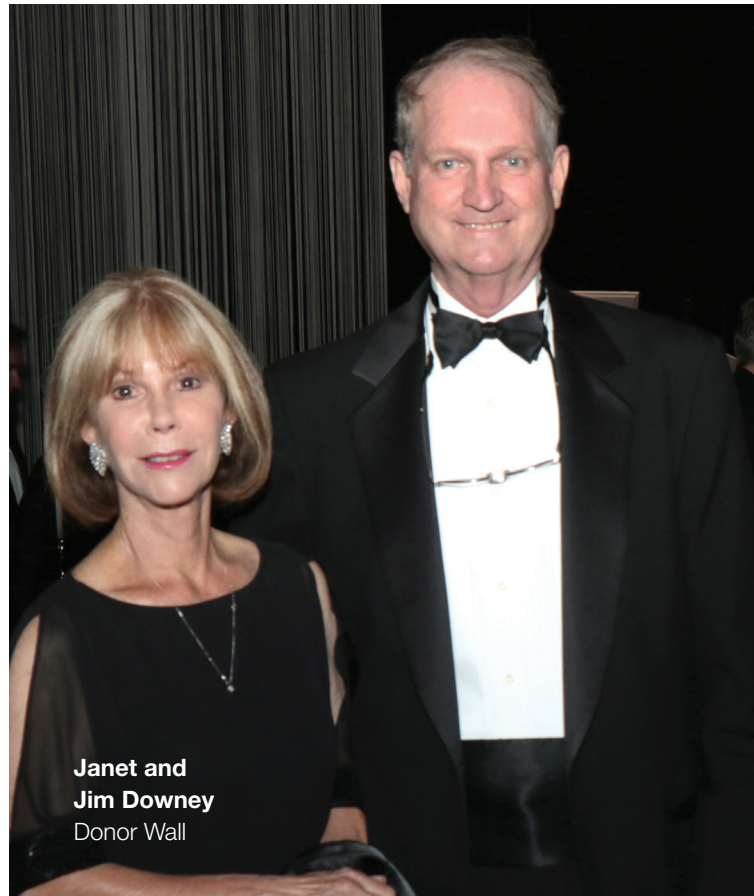


"I am excited to see how the university center will impact the Lynn experience. Now that I'm an alumna, I will still get to enjoy this wonderful addition to campus."

—Denise Rodriguez
'16, '17



Nancy Pontius
Conference Room,
second floor



**Janet and
Jim Downey**
Donor Wall



Barbara Gutin
Irving and Barbara
Gutin Living Room



**John and
Cindy Langan**
Conference Room,
second floor



"Since 2010 as a freshman, to 2014 as an MBA student, to 2015 as a full-time employee—the growth Lynn has undergone is monumental. I can't wait to see the university center come to life."

—Sydney Putnam '10, '14



Robin Muir
Robin and Robert
Muir Offices,
Hannifan Center
for Career
Connections

Our cornerstone donors

Several major contributors to the Christine E. Lynn University Center could not make the groundbreaking ceremony, but their influence on the project will be ever present in the spaces named for them:

Charles and Susan Urso
The Urso Family Student Life Suite

William and Nancy Christopher
The Christopher Family Office,
Student Life Suite

Dr. Albert Cohen Family
Meeting Room, second floor

**Brooks and Maria Eden
Eden Charitable Foundation**
Meeting Room, second floor

Sanger Family Foundation
Mark Sanger Office,
Hannifan Center for
Career Connections

Janice V. Middlebrook
Bradley Middlebrook II
Conference Room, second floor

Mary Thom Osborne
Office, Center for Student Involvement

Robert and Julie Daugherty
Donor Wall

Robert Caulk and Anne O'Callaghan
Donor Wall

Audrey and Kevin Flannery
Donor Wall

David and Lucy Craske Long
Office, Center for Student Involvement

**Feigl Estate, In Memory
of Ruth and Kenneth Feigl**
Conference Room,
Center for Student Involvement

Linda Sandelman
Robert M. Sandelman Office,
Center for Student Involvement

Lisa and David Desmond
The Desmond Family Lobby,
Student Life Suite

Per and Asa Loof
Per and Asa Loof Office, Study Abroad

Richard and Susan Finkelstein
Donor Wall

Robert and Donna Golden
Donor Wall

Lou and Anne Green
Donor Wall

Matthew B. Jaeger
Donor Wall

Daniel Mathews III
Donor Wall

Rita Michel
Donor Wall

Mr. and Mrs. R. Brady Osborne Jr.
Donor Wall

The Piuggi Family
Donor Wall

The Robinson Family
Donor Wall

Michael Sirchio, Class of '04 and '05
Donor Wall

Greg Sullivan
Donor Wall

Patricia A. Thomas
Donor Wall

Vincent Vesce
Donor Wall

New scholarship fund honors Mary Veccia

Almost to the minute, Joseph W. Veccia '88 can tell you when he proposed to Mary Babione '88. It was 1975. They were seniors at Boca Raton High School. They were only 18—and it was technically their first date—so Mary's rational response was, “You're crazy. Of course I'm not going to marry you.”

For 60 days straight, he asked her the same question.

“Finally, she said yes,” he said.

Exactly one week after graduation, they were married.

“Even at 18, she knew what she wanted,” he said. “She was solid, very steady and calm. Mary was a woman among girls.”

On Dec. 16, 2016, after 40 years of marriage, three children and seven grandchildren, Mary died at the age of 58.

“She was Mary, full of grace,” Veccia said, “If you met her, you felt like you'd been touched by grace.”

The Veccias, who went to College of Boca Raton as young parents and graduated with degrees in mortuary science, bought Babione Funeral Home from Mary's father in the late '80s. They worked at desks six feet from each other for four decades, growing the business until it encompassed 115 funeral homes in 18 states. They already had begun the process of divesting the business to live “happily ever after” when Mary became sick.

“I have done 20,000 funerals in my lifetime,” Veccia said, “and I have never seen 10 priests at the altar, with 900 people in the church. But that's my Mary. Who else is so admired?”

The true measure of Mary's grace unfolds in the stories of those she helped. There was the woman at Hospice.

“She told me, ‘Your wife bought me a car,’” Veccia said. “She had been in an abusive relationship and Mary helped her get out.”



Joseph and Mary Veccia with two of their grandchildren

“She was Mary, full of grace. If you met her, you felt like you'd been touched by grace.”

— Joseph W. Veccia

There was the woman at the funeral home. Mary had helped her pay for college. And there were dozens more, strangers, neighbors and family members who had received advice, a hand up or spiritual guidance from Mary. She loved to help single moms in particular.

To honor her, Veccia has made a significant donation to establish the Mary Veccia Endowed Scholarship. He hopes it will benefit single mothers (or their children) working toward a Lynn degree.

“Mary would love this,” he said. “In his eulogy, my son-in-law said that Mary told him when she was diagnosed with cancer that she had lived a blessed life, even if it would be only 58 years. She said she had known more love in those years than most people could hope for in 100. I feel blessed every day that she chose to spend those years with me. And I'm glad her grace can go on touching people who need it.”

Singing the praises of Lynn

Karen Barbash is a mom on a mission to tell other parents about Lynn, especially about its Institute for Achievement and Learning.

“If I can help someone be aware of how Lynn changes lives, then I will get on my soapbox and tell people exactly why I am so enthusiastic about this university,” she said.

Evan and Ben Hirschman, Barbash's bright, popular sons, had learning challenges in their Maryland high school. Evan, five years older than Ben, resisted the idea of labeling himself challenged. He enrolled at the University of Arizona, seeking no academic support. After a disappointing start, the family heard about Lynn, and Evan transferred.

“It was life-transforming for him,” Barbash said. “He was excited by the classes, loved his professors. For the first time, he loved school and his self-confidence soared.”

The institute's staff and faculty helped Evan discover his strengths, and they used technology and academic strategies to help him overcome his weaknesses.

He graduated in 2015 with a business degree and is thriving as a pharmaceutical sales rep.

Ben is now a junior, studying digital media and journalism, working toward a career in sports journalism.

“It was his academic coach at the institute who noticed how articulate he was,” Barbash said. “She suggested he look into a communications major, and he absolutely loves it.”

The institute coached Ben so well, in fact, that he is no longer in the program.

Barbash worked as a senior environmental consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton, but after Ben was born, she wanted a change. She started Sing-a-long with Karen, a musical mommy-and-me program in metro Washington, D.C.

“I expected it to be very part-time,” said Barbash, a classically trained guitarist. “But it took off, and I was suddenly earning more than I was at Booz Allen.”

With one son graduated and another enjoying a successful junior year, Barbash and her husband, Barry Barbash, partner with the law firm of Willkie, Farr & Gallagher LLP and co-head of the firm's asset management department, support Lynn's annual fund and host admission recruitment events.

“I wish I could host 30 a year,” she said. “I want to tell every parent and every student who is on the fence between two schools that Lynn will change their lives.”



Karen Barbash (and a panda friend) entertains a tiny guest at Sing-a-long with Karen, her musical mommy-and-me program in Washington, D.C., where Barbash also hosts recruitment events for Lynn.



Dr. Lauri Olivier, Laura Sylvester and Jayne Malfitano

Sylvester Foundation endows professorship

New endowed chair accelerates the engine of entrepreneurship at Lynn.

Founded in 1911 in Rochester, New York, by the Sylvester family under the name F.A. Smith Manufacturing Co., FASCO Industries was a start-up that became a manufacturing giant. Its motors, blowers and condensers have operated in millions of American households for decades, though most homeowners likely never knew it, unless their ceiling fan needed a replacement part.

After FASCO was sold in 1980, its president, Harcourt M. Sylvester Jr., began his life's work of investing the proceeds of the sale in charitable causes. The Harcourt M. and Virginia W. Sylvester Foundation has donated more than \$75 million to cancer research, disaster relief, community services and higher education.

Much of its philanthropy has been quiet, behind-the-scenes work, like a motor that keeps organizations humming along nicely.

This is true of its most recent gift to Lynn, a quiet powerhouse of an endowment for the College of Business and Management. It has made a significant donation to create the Sylvester Foundation Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurship.

“The chair will have the opportunity to work closely with students to develop creative and innovative solutions,” said Jayne Malfitano of the Sylvester Foundation. “Our intent was to assist Lynn in fostering intellectual diversity by recruiting and retaining great faculty members.”

The endowed chair expands the entrepreneurship major, teaching students how to develop and nurture a young business, with skills like raising capital and valuing a business.

Beginning in the fall term 2017, Dr. Lauri Olivier will serve as the first Sylvester Foundation Endowed Chair in Entrepreneurship. Olivier has a doctorate in biomedical engineering from Duke University and an MBA from Northwestern University.

The chair will also serve as director of the Snyder Idea Lab, which allows students from all disciplines to collaborate with local entrepreneurs and professors to transform start-up concepts into ready-to-launch businesses.

Malfitano and her sister, Laura Sylvester, believe their father, Harcourt Sylvester, who died in 2007, would have been pleased that the endowment will motivate students eager to start up powerhouse companies of their own.

“Our grandfather and father grew FASCO into a thriving company,” Sylvester said. “It’s exciting to think we will play a small part in so many bright futures.”

Malfitano hopes the endowment inspires Lynn students to become opportunity hunters.

“Our goal is to encourage them to discover their unique personal talents, passions and values and to develop the ability to think outside the box.”

“My goal is to create an entrepreneurial climate throughout Lynn where students have the resources and guidance to build their dreams.”

—Dr. Lauri Olivier, Sylvester Foundation Endowed Chair

The strategist

As soon as Jerry Collender '17 enrolled in college in his home state of Virginia, he realized traditional teaching — tailoring lessons to only one type of learner — wouldn't work for him. So he transferred to Lynn.

“I'm dyslexic, so I've always had trouble learning content in some of my classes,” he said. “I needed a school of smaller size that offered more opportunities.”

His strategy:

- **Enroll** in the Institute for Achievement and Learning.
- **Become** more independent.
- **Work** with an academic coach. “Emily Marold helped me learn to manage my time.”
- **Discover** the benefit of better skills: a better social life. “I founded the Lynn chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.”
- **Reap** the rewards.
 - The Boice Scholarship to study abroad in Australia
 - Major League Baseball meetings with sports management program
- **Plan** for the future. “I want to be a sports agent.”



Jerry Collender '17

The smaller good

Sometimes modest gifts do the greater good.

Generosity has no minimum giving level. It can be a \$15 million donation, like Christine E. Lynn’s gift to the new university center. Or it can be a \$15 donation stuffed into an envelope, signed “anonymous.”

To Lynn, all gifts are acts of great generosity, and they all make a difference. Modest gifts, in fact, make up the highest percentage of donations to the annual fund: Almost 80 percent are less than \$500.

“People like to give to people,” said Sherry Henry, associate director of annual giving. “They see the students, they meet President Ross, they know the faculty, and they want to be part of that. It feels good to see the faces of the people your gift impacts.”

In a 2016 study, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* found that 53 percent of donors at any level make gifts only when they know their support is making a real difference.

Kevin Kerr ’01, ’03, director of network and support services at Lynn for 19 years, can see his donation at work every day, in the computer systems he oversees, in the manicured grounds, in the students walking to and from class. He has contributed to the annual fund’s immediate needs for six consecutive years.

“Lynn is an awesome place to work,” he said. “Donating is the least I can do for an organization I love so dearly.”

Like Kerr, most donors to the annual fund designate their gifts for immediate needs. Other popular designations for gifts below \$500 are theater arts, the Conservatory of Music, athletics and the general scholarship fund.

Annual gifts below \$500 allow Lynn to respond to immediate needs and award scholarships for students, the greatest good for any school.

In the last three years, the average gift to Lynn’s annual fund has more than tripled, now just above \$394. This reflects a change in national giving patterns, too. According to a study of tax returns spanning 2006–2012, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* found that the wealthiest Americans (those who earn \$200,000 or more) have reduced the share of income they donate by 4.6 percent. On the other hand, middle- and lower-income Americans have increased their share of income donated by 4.5 percent.

Dr. Lisa Miller, director of annual programs, is not surprised by this trend. She believes middle- and lower-income Americans give a higher percentage of their incomes because they have benefited personally at some point from the work of nonprofits, perhaps from a scholarship.

“They realize that someone helped them and they are truly paying it forward,” said Miller, who holds a doctorate in organizational leadership and is an expert on the behavior of giving.

Lynn is fortunate to have a vibrant mix of donors, those who give smaller gifts and major donors who come through for big projects like new buildings and endowments. Annual gifts below \$500 are bread-and-butter donations for Lynn. They allow the university to respond to immediate needs, fund travel for research and competition and, of course, award scholarships for students, the greatest good for any school.

“Major donors make a significant difference with one gift,” Miller said, “but often they are done after a year or two. Annual fund donors, though, give every year and sometimes more than once a year.”

Receiving gifts great and small does more than balance the university’s portfolio.

“It creates a beautiful community of supporters,” Henry said, “to have people of all income levels giving what they can to a cause they believe in.”



If you would like to contribute to the annual fund—donations below \$500 always welcome!—please visit lynn.edu/giving/annual-giving. Or contact Sherry Henry, associate director of annual giving, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, at +1 561-237-7467 or sherry@lynn.edu.

The John Oliveira String Competition

Our violin master, Elmar Oliveira, honors his first teacher (and brother).

John Oliveira was an extraordinary violinist. He played in the Kansas City Philharmonic and the Houston Symphony for almost two decades.

The John Oliveira String Competition was created by his younger brother Elmar Oliveira to honor the musician, but also to honor John Oliveira as big brother, mentor and personal guide to a life enriched by and dedicated to music.

“I heard him practicing when I was still in the womb,” said Elmar, Lynn’s Conservatory of Music’s Distinguished Artist in Residence. “By the time I started formal lessons, my ear was already so developed, it was almost like all I needed was for my fingers to catch up.”

Elmar was late to pick up a violin—nine years old, ancient in today’s gifted-toddler culture.

“I developed quickly. At the end of a year, I played my first recital,” Elmar said. “A Mozart concerto.”

John was 11 years older than Elmar, so was quite mature enough to take up where Elmar’s public school violin lessons ended. John taught Elmar how to be technically adept and how to create the right sound, mold a phrase, perform with presence.

Elmar won his first competition at 14 and went on to become one of the most celebrated violinists in the world, winning the Avery Fisher Prize and the Naumburg International Competition.

Some might say John’s lessons even chipped away at the Iron Curtain. In 1978, at the height of the Cold War, Elmar became the first American violinist to win the prestigious Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow. He told *Violinist* magazine that the gold medal could only be conferred on an American after Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev had been consulted. To this day, John’s protégé is still the only American to take the prize home from Russia.

“His teaching went beyond violin,” Elmar said. “He was a great mentor and taught me to appreciate art, literature and all the best things in life. I decided to name this competition for him to honor the gifts he gave me.”

Open to violin, cello, viola and bass players in the conservatory, the competition helps students prepare for auditions for positions in symphonies and orchestras.

John Oliveira died of colon cancer at the age of 51.

Some might say John Oliveira's violin lessons even chipped away at the Iron Curtain at the height of the Cold War.



Elmar Oliveira

Elmar Oliveira donates all the funds to cover the expenses of the competition, as well as the \$1,000 prize money. If you’d like to partner with him in funding the competition, please **contact Lisa Miller: lmiller@lynn.edu or +1 561-237-7745.**



“I’m fortunate that Lynn focuses on performance. The only way to get better is by doing it, and there is no better way than performing in a competition.”

—Trace Johnson '16

Competition winner discovers inside story of Barber’s cello sonata

On April 29, the 2017 winner of the John Oliveira String Competition, cellist Trace Johnson, performed his first-place recital at the Amarnick-Goldstein Concert Hall. He performed Samuel Barber’s Cello Sonata Op. 6, which is particularly personal for him and his teacher, David Cole. Cole’s father, Orlando, famed cellist with the Curtis String Quartet, premiered the composition with Barber in New York in 1933.

“It’s a piece that really has a lot of meaning for me, and something I have been playing for four or five years,” said Johnson, who earned his master’s degree in cello from Lynn in 2016 and is working toward his professional performance certification.

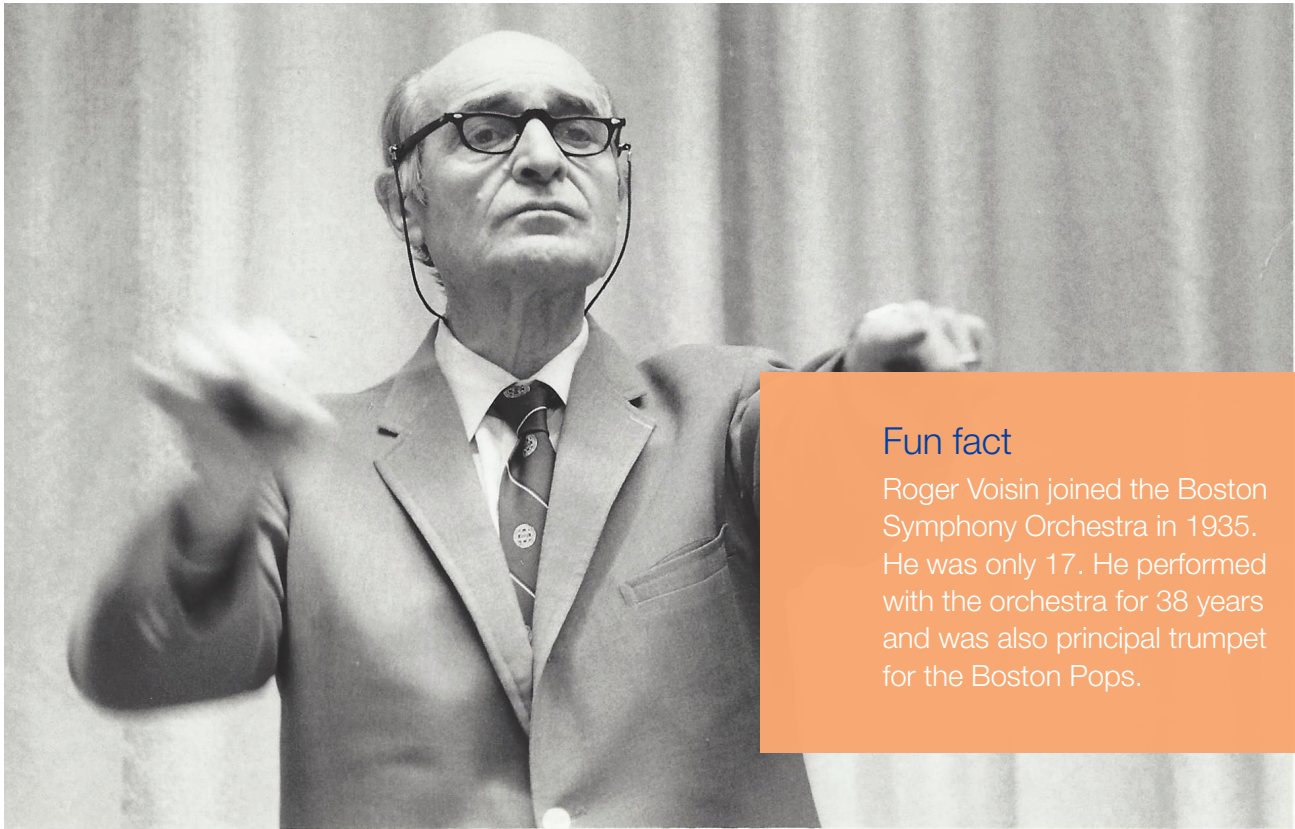
“It was awesome to study this piece with Professor Cole, getting the inside story. It was like learning about a whole new side to an old friend.”

Johnson said competitions like the John Oliveira String Competition offer essential preparation for professional musicians.

“I’m fortunate that Lynn emphasizes performance. The only way you get better is by doing it, and there is no better way than performing in a competition.”



Douglass Kay, M.D., and Susan Kay



Roger Voisin

Fun fact
Roger Voisin joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1935. He was only 17. He performed with the orchestra for 38 years and was also principal trumpet for the Boston Pops.

Kay gift launches trumpet competition

Roger Voisin Memorial Trumpet Competition honors famed musician.

Douglass Kay, M.D., and his wife, Susan, have made a generous contribution to Lynn’s Conservatory of Music to inaugurate the Roger Voisin Memorial Trumpet Competition, with support from the Voisin Family Trust.

The competition takes place at the Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center Jan. 13 and 14, 2018. It is for trumpeters enrolled as full-time college students.

“It’s going to be such fun to watch it develop,” said Dr. Kay. “An event like this presents so many opportunities for students and faculty to meet trumpeters from all over the world and make lifelong friendships and career connections. All you have to do is provide the opportunity and just watch where they take it.”

Named for one of America’s most influential classical trumpet players, the Roger Voisin Memorial Trumpet Competition is the brainchild of associate professor of trumpet Marc Reese, who was Voisin’s student.

“He was my musical mentor when I was 18 to 22, my most crucial time for musical growth,” Reese said. “I wanted to honor his memory for all that he gave me and the trumpet world.”

Reese said competitions prepare students for real-world auditions and can actually “be far more challenging than the repertoire for an orchestral audition.”

Brian Garcia, ’14, a trumpet student from Costa Rica working toward his professional performance certificate at Lynn, said he intends to apply to the competition.

“An event like this presents so many opportunities for students and faculty to meet trumpeters from all over the world.”

—Dr. Douglass Kay

“To see a competition from the inside, to see how the whole process unfolds is a special opportunity,” he said. “Of course, I want to be a finalist, but it will also be a great learning experience just to be on campus while it’s being created. It’s really exciting.”

The event’s benefactors have three connections to Lynn. The Kays’ daughter Alexis graduated with a degree in hospitality management in 2006. Dr. Kay has taught courses as an adjunct.

And, after retiring from a career in Maryland that spanned mechanical engineering, a psychiatry practice, teaching at The Georgetown University School of Medicine and partnering in a health insurance company, he wanted to make a donation to the conservatory in gratitude for the years of performances he and his wife have enjoyed.

Their donation took the shape of an international trumpet competition when Kay was introduced to Reese. It happened that Kay had been a trumpeter in high school, and his music collection included brass pieces performed by Voisin.

“From there, it all just sort of fell together nicely,” Dr. Kay said.

The Kay Family Commissioning Project has also asked composer James Stephenson III to write a piece for trumpet and piano, to be performed for the first time by the competition’s panel of judges during the opening ceremony.

A violin for Yasa

Jim Birle bestows a new instrument through Dean’s Fund for Excellence.

Yasa Poletaeva has a favorite quote from the Spanish poet Juan Ramón Jiménez: “If they give you ruled paper, write the other way.” It seems a little contradictory for a young musician whose life centers on the firmly ruled lines of a musical staff.

“As students, we are used to being told how and what to do,” Poletaeva said. “But then there is a moment when you walk on stage and you are one with the universe. You just have to trust your guts and create.”



Jim Birle and Yasa Poletaeva



Fun fact

Yasa Poletaeva was crowned Miss St. Petersburg in 2006. Her talent? You guessed it: violin. She also sang, recited poetry and displayed her knowledge of the city’s history (beauty pageants in Russia, Poletaeva said, are heavy on talent).

A native of St. Petersburg, Russia, Poletaeva is working toward her professional performance certificate at Lynn’s Conservatory of Music, under the tutelage of Elmar Oliveira. She earned her master’s degree in violin from Lynn in 2016 and is also a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. She has won Lynn’s Concerto Competition, the John Oliveira String Competition and many competitions in Russia. She tours with the Contrast Duo and has played with the Miami Symphony and the Palm Beach Chamber Music Festival. She has performed in the Philippines, Germany, Latvia, Finland, France and Italy.

And she has done it all on a borrowed violin.

Enter Jim Birle.

When Birle discovered Poletaeva was in need of her own violin, he made a gift right away to the Dean’s Fund for Excellence.

“I am so fortunate to be able to do this for her,” he said. “These students are so accomplished and they often have very little financial help. I have been going to concerts for years and I really care about the students. It makes me so happy to give them something in return.”

And Poletaeva is beyond happy to receive it.

“What can be more beautiful than buying an instrument for a musician?” she said. “It’s like giving an artist wings to fly.”

“I want them to have these instruments to enhance their careers. I consider it an honor to help them.” —Jim Birle

Selecting a violin is no typical trip to the corner store. To Poletaeva, the process is less about the neck, strings and pegs and more about alchemy.

“I need to fall in love with the violin,” she said. “Like with a real person. Because it’s actually a part of me, a part of my soul.”

Funding in place, she is still searching for her soulmate.

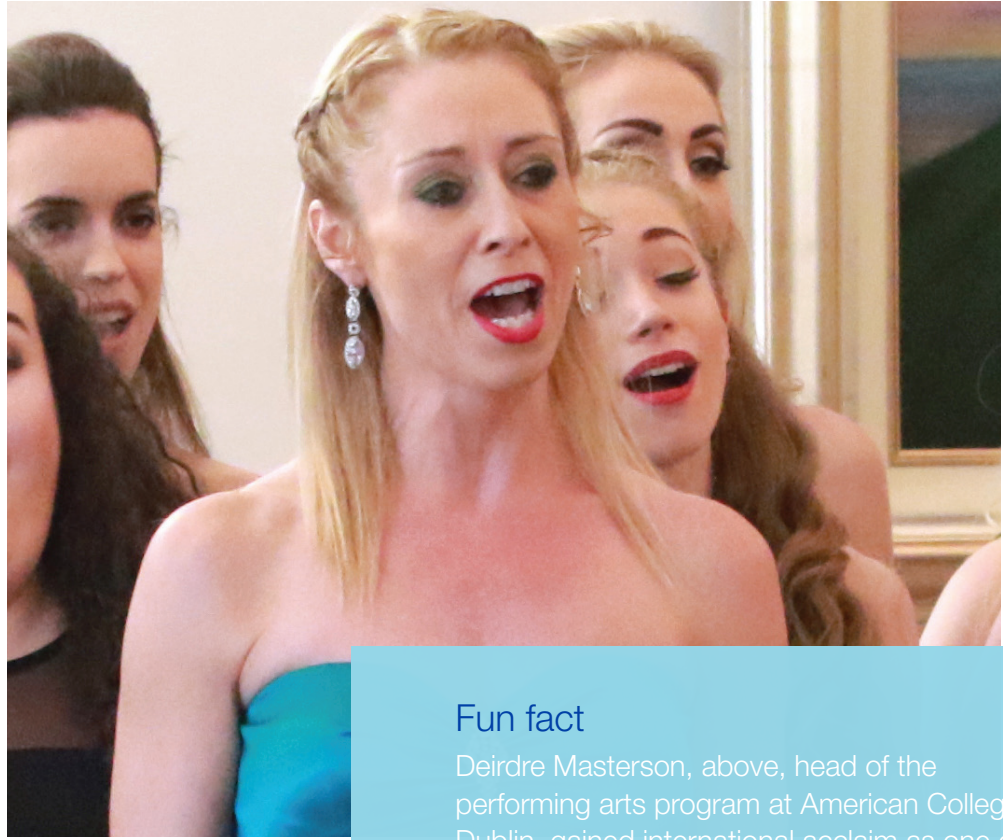
This isn’t the first time Birle, a retired executive with General Electric and the Blackstone Group, has bestowed an instrument on a conservatory student. Three years ago, he and his wife attended a Philharmonia concert at their country club. Clarinetist Fabiola Porras ’10, ’12, ’14 was seated at their table after the performance.

Birle said, “I told her I enjoyed her music, then I asked her about her clarinet. She said, ‘It’s not mine. It’s borrowed.’”

On the spot, Birle told her he and his wife would buy her a clarinet to own, which they did.

“I want them to have these instruments to enhance their careers,” Birle said, “I consider it an honor to help them. I feel like I’m the real beneficiary of it, not them, because I get to hear them play and follow their careers when they graduate.”

Porras now plays clarinet for the Miami City Ballet.



Fun fact
Deirdre Masterson, above, head of the performing arts program at American College Dublin, gained international acclaim as one of the Irish Sopranos. She serenaded McArt with eight Irish classics, including “Danny Boy.”

A grand night for Jan McArt

Tribute soiree opens with big news: A new drama scholarship.

If 26 theater students from Dublin flew across the Atlantic for the singular purpose of serenading you with Rodgers and Hammerstein show tunes, what would you do?

If you were Jan McArt, you’d sing along, of course.

“I’m a little embarrassed by all of the attention,” McArt said, “but who can resist Rodgers and Hammerstein?”

On May 3, at the Wold Performing Arts Center—McArt’s home theater on the Lynn campus—fans, family and friends gathered for a “A Grand Night for Singing,” A Tribute to Jan McArt, a revue of hit songs from Rodgers and Hammerstein shows like *Carousel*, *Oklahoma!* and *The Sound of Music*. Organized by Lynn President Emeritus Donald Ross and his wife, Helen, the evening honored McArt for her 14 years as director of theatre arts development at Lynn.

“Jan is the most vivacious person you’ll ever meet. Everyone loves her,” Ross said. “She deserves to be honored now.”

McArt has been friends with the Rosses for decades, first meeting at McArt’s Little Palm Theatre, where Boca Raton’s tots and teens (including daughter Ellen and son Kevin Ross, now president of Lynn) received their first exposure to the arts.

So what’s the connection between Florida’s First Lady of Musical Theatre and a stage full of singing Irish students? It’s the new Jan McArt Scholarship—announced for the first time at the event—which offers full-tuition assistance for a drama student at Lynn to spend a year studying at the American College Dublin.

But the Irish connection goes even deeper. McArt helped develop the Dublin school’s theater program, the first one in Ireland to offer a bachelor’s degree in fine arts with a specialization in musical theater.

McArt helped develop the Dublin school’s theater program, the first one in Ireland to offer a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in fine arts with a specialization in musical theater.

“Jan has been much more than a consultant,” Ross said. “She has been so generous with her time and talent, even teaching master classes when she’s visited the college in Ireland. It’s fitting to offer Lynn students the chance to study in the program she helped develop.”

Jessica Quigley, who graduated in May with a drama degree, spent 10 days in Ireland in 2015 to present a musical with the Lynn theater department. She said students who receive the Jan McArt Scholarship will be transformed by Dublin.

“It was the best trip of my life,” she said. “I was doing what I loved surrounded by another culture.”

The Irish campus is close to events like the Wexford Drama Festival. It is even closer to buildings rooted in the Irish theater tradition: The childhood home of dramatist, writer and bon vivant Oscar Wilde, in fact, serves as the campus’ cultural center.

“Ireland has things to offer in terms of performance, study, atmosphere and history that you just can’t get anywhere else in the world,” McArt said. “It makes a wonderful education in the performing arts for our students.”

“A Grand Night for Singing,” including the whole trip for the Dublin performers, was paid for entirely by McArt’s friends and admirers. All proceeds from the evening benefit the Jan McArt Scholarship.

Annie Green, Christine Lynn, Debbie Lindstrom and Patricia Toppel chaired the event, with Elaine Johnson Wold as honorary chair.

All styles of giving

Zachary Levitetz '12



Close encounters

Zachary Levitetz is an artist, an athlete and a marine life fanatic. He is also a philanthropist.

As a board member of the Levitetz Family Foundation, Levitetz has been part of the team responsible for generous gifts to Lynn, including projects like the Remembrance Plaza. In the last five years, the Levitetz Family Scholarship has given \$125,000 to 51 deserving Lynn students.

"It just makes sense to give back to a place that gave me so much," he said. "Lynn creates such a great college experience for so many students."

The Boca Raton native graduated with a bachelor's degree in graphic design. He specializes in underwater wildlife photography, the more remote the location the better, like a shoot in west Florida.

"There was one day in the amazing Three Sisters Springs with about 100 manatees," he said. "I was the only person in the springs at the time. It was an incredible experience."

Levitetz credits graphic design professors Kip Miller and Mark Coné and photography professor Ellen Stern for his skill with Photoshop. "I use it on a daily basis," he said.

Processing photos might be crucial to his art, but Levitetz, owner of Zachary Levitetz Photography LLC, would prefer to be deep under the waves. Or riding them on a surfboard. He is calmest shooting in high-adrenalin, adventure mode.

"I love the days I'm face-to-face—in open water—with sharks, manatees and whales," he said.

Levitetz's work has appeared in *Luxe Interiors + Design*, *Artblend* and *Vero Beach Portfolio*, where his piece—a baby sea turtle amidst a school of fish—landed the cover.

He's a sea turtle nest monitor for the town of Gulf Stream, Brazilian jiu-jitsu competitor and, of course, proud Lynn alumnus.

"My definition of living a good life: be happy, take care of your family and give back to something you feel connected with."